



STATE OF DELAWARE  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**OHS Launching 1<sup>st</sup> Click It or Ticket Campaign of 2009**  
***Safety initiative focused on increasing seat belt use at night***

**Dover** – If you ever drive after the sun goes down, Delaware Highway Safety and law enforcement officials have some advice for you. Remember to Buckle Up! Seat belt use is often 10% lower at night than in the day even though a person's chances of being killed in a crash at night triples! In fact, more than half of the people killed in night time crashes from 2003 – 2007 in the First State were not wearing seat belts.

In an effort to increase seat belt use day *and* night, the Delaware Office of Highway Safety is launching the first *Click It or Ticket* campaign for 2009 to run from February 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>. *Click It or Ticket* is a high visibility enforcement and public awareness campaign aimed at saving lives by increasing the number of Delawareans who regularly buckle up.

The first *Click It or Ticket* campaign of 2009 will focus on increasing seat belt use at night. Awareness efforts began the week of February 15<sup>th</sup> to convey information related to night time seat belt use and the upcoming enforcement efforts. The public awareness component of the campaign includes statewide placement of billboards, radio, and television ads, and the distribution of informational posters, fliers and table tents through schools, corporations, businesses, hospitals and police agencies.

Drivers should expect to see stepped up night time enforcement of Delaware's seat belt and child restraint laws beginning February 22<sup>nd</sup> and continuing through the 28<sup>th</sup>. Fourteen State, County, and municipal police agencies throughout Delaware will conduct both roving, and stationary traffic safety patrols in well lit areas during this time. Three State Police Troops, along with Dover Police, New Castle County Police, Middletown Police and Smyrna Police will also conduct traffic safety checkpoints at night.

Why is seat belt use lower at night? Some people believe officers can't see that they aren't wearing a seat belt when they're on the roads at night. But primarily, the riskiest drivers, those who are aggressive or impaired by alcohol and/or drugs are on the roads more frequently in the evening hours. These individuals are less likely to wear seat belts overall. So not only will officers will be on the lookout for those who violate Delaware's occupant protection laws, but they will also be watching for impaired and aggressive drivers.

Delaware's seat belt law requires all vehicle occupants, even back seat passengers, to be "properly" buckled up. "Properly" means that both lap and shoulder belts must be worn. In particular, the shoulder belt must be worn across the chest. Anyone who puts the shoulder belt under their arm, or behind their back is in violation of state law and is putting themselves at great risk for being seriously injured in a crash.

The law allows officers to pull over a driver if he sees any person in the vehicle not wearing a safety belt. Officers will issue citations for seat belt violations as part of a zero tolerance policy. The ticket, which goes to the driver no matter who is unbuckled in the vehicle, is a \$25.00 fine plus court administrative fees.

Delaware's child restraint law says that the driver is responsible for making sure all children in the vehicle are properly buckled up. All children under the age of 8 years or 65lbs must be in the appropriate child restraint seat (an infant, toddler or booster seat). Children who are 8 or at least 65lbs in weight, whichever comes first must be restrained in a seat belt. Children under the age of 12 years old must ride in the back seat when passenger air bags are present up front. Child restraint violations are also \$25.00 plus court administrative fees.

Last February during the night time *Click It or Ticket* initiative, police officers statewide issued 372 citations for violations of Delaware's seat belt law. Additionally, 30 arrests were made for criminal violations such as impaired driving, drug offenses, and the existence of outstanding warrants on a person. OHS will conduct *Click It or Ticket* again in May along with the rest of the country. Enforcement will take place both day and night.

*Click It or Ticket* has been successful in raising seat belt use in Delaware from 67% in 2001 to an all time high of 91% in 2008. The national seat belt use rate is 83%. Still, 8 of the 11 vehicle occupants killed in Delaware vehicle crashes since January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, were not wearing seat belts.

For more information on Delaware's seat belt law or the *Click It or Ticket* campaign, please visit the Office of Highway Safety's website at [www.ohs.delaware.gov](http://www.ohs.delaware.gov) and click on the *Click It or Ticket* icon.